

Submitter: Richard Wisner
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Joint Special Committee On Referendum Petition
2026-302
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1599

Joint Special Committee on Referendum Petition 2026-302

Dear Co-Chairs Senator Jama and Representative Gomberg, and members of the Committee;

Considering the number of letters of testimony sent to various committees as well as to my individual state representative and senator over the years I can't help but feel writing this is yet another exercise in futility and squandered effort. Nevertheless, here is my two cents worth on Senate Bill 1599 in the hope it may influence your determination of the merits – if any – of this bill.

To begin with, I am very much opposed to SB 1599. Just what hard evidence have sponsors and supporters of SB 1599 provided that this bill is a benefit to Oregonians? It isn't hard how to imagine how this legislative trickery might be to the advantage of those legislators that originally pushed through the ODOT funding bill last session. Switching the election in which this matter is decided by the voters is plainly seen by all as more legislative monkey business. More being unresponsive to matters of concern to the public. And, a waste of time.

It doesn't take a genius to see what the sponsors of this bill are up to. The original petition called for the vote in November. That means we want the vote to be held in November—not May. Yet legislators consistently try to jimmy the system to their own liking, not their constituents. It's as if supporters of this legislation hold some sort of weird notion that their policies can do no wrong and they, not the public, know what's best. However, switching the vote on this ballot measure is absolutely wrong. But I suppose if they can fool enough of the people enough of the time, that will do, eh.

Fortunately more and more people have noticed that being force-fed is not to their liking. We don't elect people to rule, or even lead us. We elect people to serve us. Somewhere along the line this concept has been lost. We now hear of legislators doing the people's business. Pretty grandiose thinking if you ask me. Well, we are the people – and we want the vote in November when more voters have had sufficient time to contemplate the consequences of the proposed ODOT funding.

Name any policy relevant to Oregon's political dialogue these days, from the minimum wage to rent control, from ODOT to education and one finds that the idea that government intervention does not lead to a net increase in Oregon's welfare is no longer a fringe position, it is the dominant one. And if SB 1599 passes out of committee it will only confirm our legislature does not have us tax payers at heart.

So.... do the right thing.

Sincerely,
Richard Wisner